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ABSTRACT

Secondary school physical education (PE) teacher/coaches face role strain as they attempt to perform the role expectations of teacher and coach. The result of this is often poor PE teaching. This paper presents five steps that can help teacher coaches alleviate role strain and provide quality instruction to athletes and students as they work in both roles in the PE setting. Step 1 recommends creating skeletal block plans of the year's PE activities during the summer. Step 2 recommends not comparing the accomplishments of PE students to those of athletes. Step 3 suggests studying the activity that will be taught in order to understand it well before teaching. Step 4 recommends clearly stating and understanding one's own purpose for working with young people. Step 5 encourages the teacher/coach not to teach sports in PE at the same time that one is coaching them because it gives teacher/coaches the sense that they are working in that sport all day and all night (which can contribute to role strain). (Contains 12 references.) (SM)

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Running Head: Teacher/Coach

Five Steps Toward Becoming A Better Teacher/Coach

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Abstract

Physical education teacher/coaches face role strain as they attempt to perform the role expectations of teacher and coach. Poor teaching in the physical education is often the result. In this manuscript, five steps are presented that, when taken, may help the teacher coach to be better able to perform well in the physical education setting.

FIVE STEPS TOWARD BECOMING

A BETTER TEACHER/COACH

Secondary school physical education teachers serve in a multitude of roles (Siedentop, Mand and Taggart, 1986). For many, the two most important job-related roles are those of the physical education teacher and coach. It is diffucult for many teacher/coaches to fulfill the time demands required to perform each role. It is also a challenge for many teacher/coaches to effectively cope with the differences in the learners and expected outcomes which vary in the teaching and coaching environments. Because of the time demands of teaching and coaching and the differences in the teaching and coaching environment, many teacher/coaches experience role strain (Sage, 1987).

When confronted with role strain, teacher/coaches often choose one of the roles as their primary role and compromise the other. Frequently, coach is the role chosen as primary, while the role of teacher is compromised (Bain and Wendt, 1983; Chu, 1984; Sage, 1989, 1987). Stereotyped teacher/coaches are effective instructors in the athletic setting and ineffective instructors in their physical education classes.

It seems logical for teacher/coaches to choose coaching as the primary role, especially since coaching is often their reason for entering the field of physical education (Lawson, 1983; Sage, 1987; Templin, 1980). There are also characteristics associated with the coaching role which are

absent, or less prevalent in the physical education environment which prompt the selection of coach as the major role (Locke and Massengale, 1978). An example of differences in the two environments would be the higher degree of motivation possessed by the athletes. Because of the combination of these factors, many teacher/coaches may believe that their talents and abilities are best saved for their work in the athletic coaching role.

Unfortunately, this choice often results in decreased teacher effectiveness (Aicinena, Smith, and Steffen, 1994; Aicinena, Steffen and Smith, 1992), students being denied a quality physical education experience and the possible formation of negative attitudes toward physical education (Aicinena, 1991).

What can be done to help teacher/coaches become better instructors? Following are five steps that can be taken to help teacher/coaches alleviate role strain and assist them in the provision of quality instruction as they work in both roles.

Step 1: Create block plans in the summer. During the school year, especially when involved in coaching, it may be difficult for teacher/coaches to find time to plan adequately for classes and practices. This results in many teacher/coaches planning extensively for instruction in one setting and poorly, or not at all, for the other.

Creating a skeletal block plan (Figure 1) of the year's physical education activities in the summer can reduce the

amount of strain experienced during the school year. The procedure is quite simple. Separate the school year into 2, 3 or 4 week units depending upon personal preference. The next step is to thoughtfully identify the skills to be taught, in what order or combination they will be taught, drills which can be utilized to develop the skills, assessment and finally, how many days will be devoted to game play. The skills, drills and games can then be placed in a logical sequence over the course of the unit. The teacher/coach would then be ready to put the sequence upon the yearly calendar.

By having the year's block plans ready, teacher/coaches would have a skeletal lesson plan available for each school day of the year. A minimal amount of time would still be needed to organize the skill instruction, drills and games for the specific number of students in specific classes, but the amount of time required for effective planning each day is reduced significantly.

It is also advisable to make a block plan for athletic seasons in the summer. This saves additional time for the teacher/coach during the academic year and results in a more relaxed and effective teacher/coach. Class and athletic block plans may be saved and modified yearly, thus saving additional time for the teacher/coach. Use of the block plan in athletics and physical education will reduce the role strain experienced by the teacher/coach.

Step 2: Do not compare the accomplishments of students to those of athletes. If teacher/coaches compare athletes to students, the students will usually come up short in a variety of areas. The students will seem less motivated, less fit, less skilled and less cooperative. They may, in reality, be so.

The 6'10" high jump cleared in a high school track meet is very impressive. A coach would justifiably feel great satisfaction in having helped an athlete reach such heights. How could someone feel less satisfaction in having helped a child clear 4'0" in a physical education class when the student was initially fearful of attempting to clear the bar?

By accepting the students for the individuals that they are, teacher/coaches can find satisfaction in their classes. They can instruct and look for successes in the classroom rather than to ignore them because they cannot compare to those observed in the athletic setting. They can, in fact, compare.

Step 3: Study the activities that you will teach. If coaches are not knowledgeable concerning the sport that they coach, they are destined for failure. They will fail on the scoreboard and in any efforts to obtained skilled and purposeful play from their athletes. The same is true in regard to physical education activities. If the teacher does not know much about the activity, then how can it be taught to the students effectively?

Individuals are able to offer quality instruction in badminton, for example, only if they know the rules and strategies and are able to execute the skills (at least for the purpose of demonstration). The more they know about a sport, the more effective they are likely to be in their efforts to teach it. The summer is a good time to learn more about activities and to develop or refine skills.

Step 4: Clearly state your purpose for working with young people. When individuals decide to enter the world of the teacher/coach, is it to win? Is it to prove themselves to be a great coach? If these are the reasons, there is little hope for helping them to find comfort in their role as a physical education teacher - there are no public competitions. They are also, however, unlikely to find happiness as a coach. Few coaches win the majority of their games over the course of their career.

Many who enter the teaching profession do so because they have a vision they wish to share. This may be, for example, assisting children in the improvement of skills, fitness, knowledge or social behavior. Most coaches would say that they too hope to make their athletes skilled, fit, knowledgeable and good citizens, although these goals may become secondary to winning (Eitzen and Sage, 1993).

If teacher/coaches emphasize the goal of development **in both settings**, then perhaps the need to teach effectively in both settings would be heart-felt. Quality physical education programs must stand for something. Children must

become better skilled, more knowledgeable, or better fit. Is not winning in the athletic arena the result of skill development, fitness, knowledge and/or acceptable social behavior? Teacher/coaches must see that having successful athletic teams and "losers" in the classroom is not acceptable. If nothing is taught in physical education there are many losers. Teachers, students and society all are less than they could have been. Physical education is given a black eye.

If students are improved in their fitness, or their level of skill, a teacher/coach's goals may be realized. The opportunity exists for a child's quality of life to be improved. When this is achieved, all have won. The difference is that in physical education, no one else may know. The score is not reported in the paper.

Step 5: Do not teach sports in physical education at the same time you are coaching them. It is very typical for individuals to teach sports in physical education at the time of year in which the sport is played in the schools. For example, many teacher/coaches will teach volleyball in their classes while they are coaching the school volleyball team in the afternoon.

Teaching a sport in physical education at the same time that an individual is coaching it contributes to role strain by giving teacher/coaches the sense that they are working in that sport all day and all night. The teacher/coach may tire of the sport very quickly. Since the performance of

the coach is perceived by many to be more important than the performance of the teacher, it is easy to see why some teacher/coaches may tend to "roll out the ball" during class. They must save their enthusiasm and energy for practices.

By offering sport activities in physical education, which are out of season, teacher/coaches can avoid the feeling of having spent all day on one activity. If basketball is taught in classes, by the time volleyball practice arrives, volleyball will be a welcome change.

Teaching and coaching a sport at the same time of the year is bad for another very important reason. One cannot help but compare the athletes to their students. The students may seem like they will never improve and that they don't care in comparison to the athletes. In such situations, it is easy to pick the athletes as being worthy of the teacher/coach's time and energy, and to believe that the students "deserve" to be neglected. These comparisons and beliefs are easy to formulate if teacher/coaches are working in the same sport during and after school.

It is true that coaching may be easier and more exciting than teaching for some teacher/coaches. The 5 steps identified and discussed above will not change this reality. What they can do is to assist in the lessening of role strain and help teacher/coaches to provide quality instruction to their athletes and students.

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Figure Caption

Figure 1. Sample three-week Block Plan for a basketball unit.

Introduce History Value Current	Dribble Cross Over Reverse Behind Back	Dribble Chest Pass Bounce P. 5 Pass	Dribble Overhead P. Set Shot Defend Shot	Dribble Combo. Pass Shoot Lay Up Fouls
Dribble B.B. Pass Lay up: L Jump Stop	Dribble Pass Lay up: R Jump S & Shoot	Dribble Pass Pick-Roll Give - Go	Combination Dribble Dribble/shoot "21" play	Rebounding Offensive Defensive 2 vs 2
Tests: Written Skills	3 vs 3 Tourney	3 vs 3 Tourney	5 vs 5 Tourney	5 vs 5 Tourney